

# RUTGERS REVIEW

VOLUME 57 ISSUE 1



IN

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ISSUE

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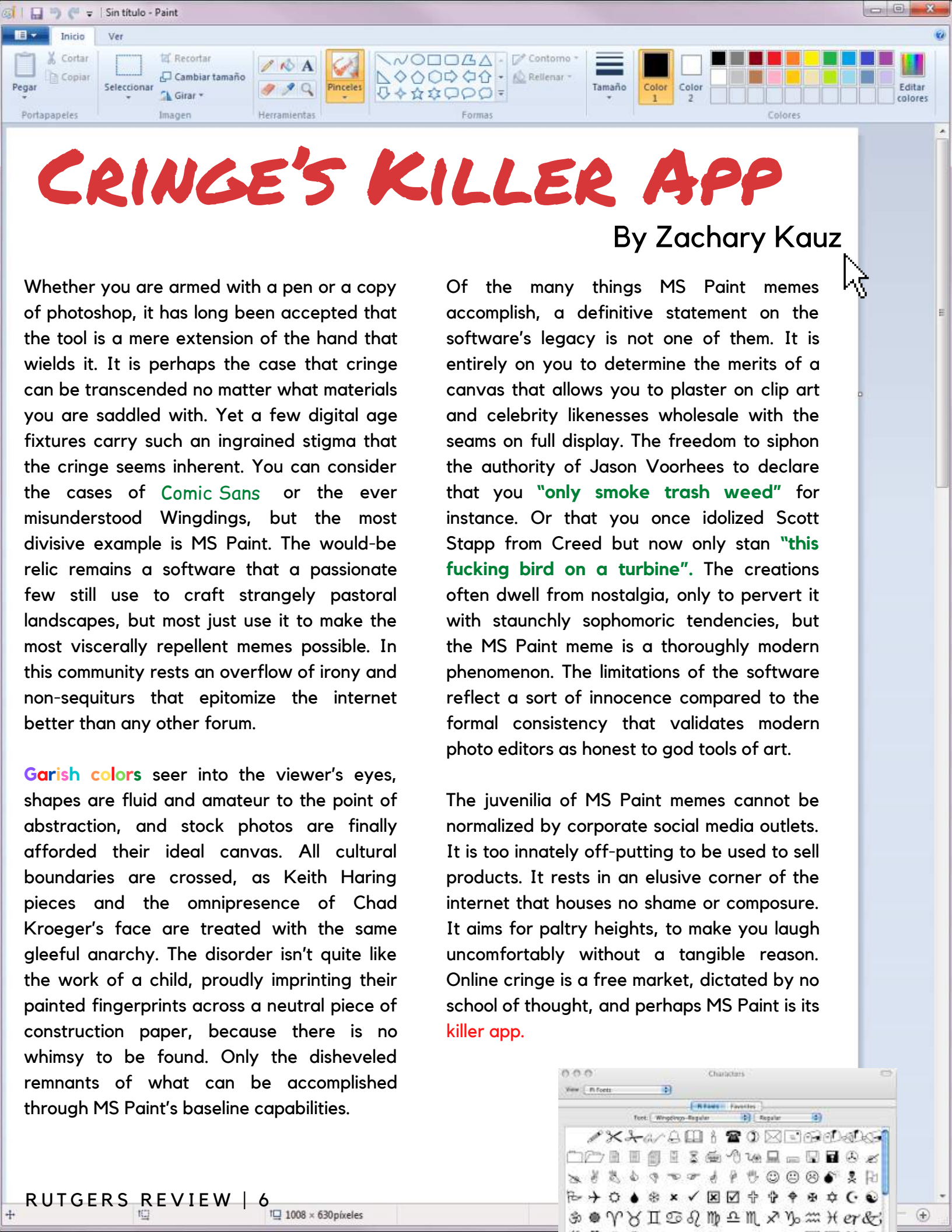




C U L T U R E

E C U L T U R E





# CRINGE'S KILLER APP

By Zachary Kauz

Whether you are armed with a pen or a copy of photoshop, it has long been accepted that the tool is a mere extension of the hand that wields it. It is perhaps the case that cringe can be transcended no matter what materials you are saddled with. Yet a few digital age fixtures carry such an ingrained stigma that the cringe seems inherent. You can consider the cases of **Comic Sans** or the ever misunderstood Wingdings, but the most divisive example is MS Paint. The would-be relic remains a software that a passionate few still use to craft strangely pastoral landscapes, but most just use it to make the most viscerally repellent memes possible. In this community rests an overflow of irony and non-sequiturs that epitomize the internet better than any other forum.

**Garish colors** seer into the viewer's eyes, shapes are fluid and amateur to the point of abstraction, and stock photos are finally afforded their ideal canvas. All cultural boundaries are crossed, as Keith Haring pieces and the omnipresence of Chad Kroeger's face are treated with the same gleeful anarchy. The disorder isn't quite like the work of a child, proudly imprinting their painted fingerprints across a neutral piece of construction paper, because there is no whimsy to be found. Only the disheveled remnants of what can be accomplished through MS Paint's baseline capabilities.

Of the many things MS Paint memes accomplish, a definitive statement on the software's legacy is not one of them. It is entirely on you to determine the merits of a canvas that allows you to plaster on clip art and celebrity likenesses wholesale with the seams on full display. The freedom to siphon the authority of Jason Voorhees to declare that you **"only smoke trash weed"** for instance. Or that you once idolized Scott Stapp from Creed but now only stan **"this fucking bird on a turbine"**. The creations often dwell from nostalgia, only to pervert it with staunchly sophomoric tendencies, but the MS Paint meme is a thoroughly modern phenomenon. The limitations of the software reflect a sort of innocence compared to the formal consistency that validates modern photo editors as honest to god tools of art.

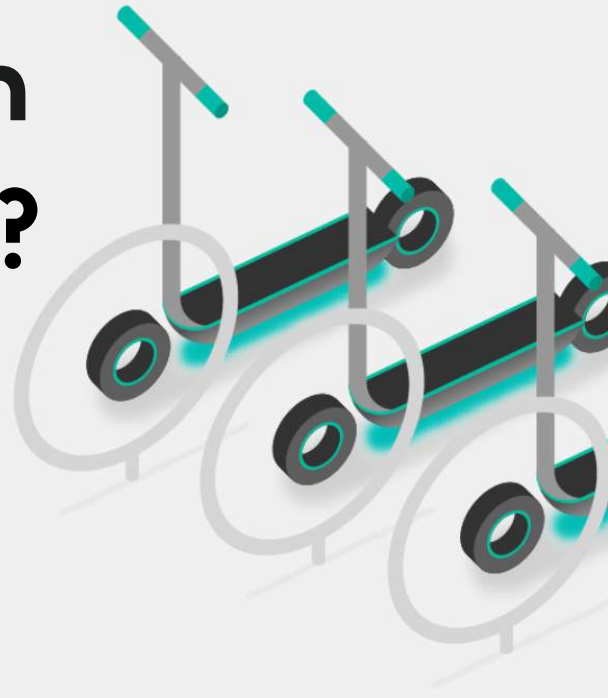
The juvenilia of MS Paint memes cannot be normalized by corporate social media outlets. It is too innately off-putting to be used to sell products. It rests in an elusive corner of the internet that houses no shame or composure. It aims for paltry heights, to make you laugh uncomfortably without a tangible reason. Online cringe is a free market, dictated by no school of thought, and perhaps MS Paint is its **killer app**.

# Do Students Dream of Electric Scooters?

By Zachary Kauz

In an otherwise untouched landscape, swept of students and staff alike, alien machinery has begun to show up on Rutgers campuses. Not 5G towers but something far more atypical. Overnight in the ghost towns of Livingston and College Ave, a sign of times to come has quietly introduced itself. On the otherwise mundane corner of Road 2 and Suttons Lane, shadowy figures stand upright, indifferent to the wind or surrounding traffic; staring vacantly through passersby like wild deer, but the figures are instead robotic, angular, and unnatural.

A shroud of mystery surrounds the newfound presence of electric scooters on campus. When the semester starts, will there be some sort of order to the parking situation? Or will they continue to spill over campus like they were students themselves. Are they meant for traveling in between campuses or just across one? Do you use them on sidewalks or roads? Can you do tricks on them? Do they serve a purely practical purpose or will electric scooter gangs become a facet of Rutgers culture?



I must admit that I am skeptical. Attempting to redirect students from the bus system in favor of an outdoor activity that costs money (\$1 to start plus \$0.28 per minute) is quite the uphill battle, particularly when your scooters travel uphill at less than 15 MPH. Consider those who have bulky backpacks, or those who wear suits to class. Consider the student's natural state of sustained tiredness, confusion, and financial agony. Nevertheless, I commend the effort to provide an alternative to the bus system. With the degree of uncertainty surrounding the Fall 2021 semester, who knows if riding the bus will be an ideal situation? Experimental times call for experimental measures, but I call for a different measure. I champion the return of roller skates.

For one they are just as theatrical as the electric scooter, if not more so. It will be a far more imposing image seeing students roller skating in packs compared to the lurching speed of the e-scooter. It is also a source of exercise, the likes of which Rutgers mandated transportation cannot offer. It also allows students to pay one down payment and use them anywhere, as opposed to the confines of a Rutgers campus. The e-scooters in fact shut down if you try to take them on Route 18 in between campuses. Non-campus owned transportation faces no such restrictions. In a time where it costs money to scoot to class, perhaps using your own scooter (or skates) is a revolutionary act.





# ART

& ENTERTAINMENT



## TUBI

IS THE MOST  
GENEROUS  
STREAMING  
PLATFORM OUT  
THERE



## IT'S A RAINY

COLD FALL DAY

RUTGERS  
REVIEW



# tubi

Is the Most Generous  
Streaming Platform  
Out There



If you're a frugal person like I am, you've probably encountered a situation in which you had a strong desire to watch a movie, but didn't want to pay for one and realize that your selection is rather limited. You're tempted to thwart legality by pursuing piracy, but you realize that it is rather difficult to find a reliable outlet without risking technological consequences such as viruses, malware, or identity theft. So, you're stuck and you're about to give up until you see something glistening in the distance. You approach the light and discover something amazing. Something that practically fits your description of cinematic nirvana, yet does not cost a penny. This nirvana manifests into Tubi.

Before you lambast me for essentially advertising a platform owned by a multi-billion dollar media conglomerate, I want to make it abundantly clear that I am in no way paid to sell you a product. I'm speaking as a film enthusiast and entertainment industry nerd. Tubi genuinely impressed me with their lineup of over 20,000 movies, many of which are worth watching. Even their television show offering is pretty impressive. They have *One Punch Man*, *Bleach*, *Dark Shadows*, *3rd Rock from the Sun*, *Cowboy Bebop*, and more. While some would argue that Tubi's selection pales in comparison to say Netflix or Hulu, I should stress that this platform is free, thus lower budget/cheaper license content will appear more frequently. However, I think that fact alone is Tubi's greatest feature.

Independent cinema, be it foreign or Troma, often gets marginalized by the larger names and franchises on premium platforms. The only notable platforms wherein independent cinema is highlighted are the Criterion Collection, Kanopy (which can be an extension of Criterion) and Mubi (yes, that's a different company than Tubi, pay attention). These specialty platforms, with the exception of Shudder, are pretty costly as they are catered to the most avid movie fans. Tubi lacks any price tag and thus swallows up any film that doesn't have massive licensing fees. This results in a vast plurality of low budget movies relaxing on Tubi, their new home. Of course, cheap-to-license movies can include box office blunders like *Gods of Egypt* or Guy Ritchie's *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword*, which lost their respective studios \$90 million and over \$150 million. *Gods of Egypt* and *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* were both evicted from Tubi's residence. However, many other box office bombs will find a place in the guest room.

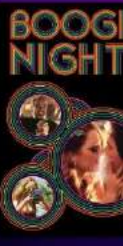
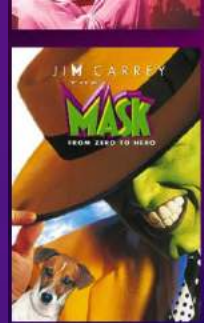
Also, how can I forget that all seasons of Donald Trump-hosted *The Apprentice* are available on Tubi? That's what Murdoch money gets you! Joking aside, the diversity of content that Tubi provides for the price of occasional advertisements that are conveniently placed during narrative breaks in whatever you're watching could make the service a genuine competitor to its premium rivals, particularly with the likes of Hulu.

Unlike the premium services, Tubi lacks exclusive original content that helps give the platform a sense of identity. However, the accessibility of the service in addition to its vast library of content creates the argument that Tubi could acquire a sizable market share. Despite the lack of a marketing infrastructure, Tubi managed to accumulate millions of monthly active users, indicating that word-of-mouth is the service's greatest advertising weapon.

In an era of premium streaming services bombarding the air waves with ceaseless marketing, Tubi made hundreds of millions of dollars without being a recognizable name like Hulu or Netflix. Tubi doesn't have a flashy exclusive series everyone is talking about on Twitter, nor do they have a compelling lineup for mainstream audiences. What Tubi does have over the premium competition is a treasure trove of overlooked, forgotten, and underrated content. While I commend HBO Max for gathering a healthy library of Criterion films, Tubi houses a far larger quantity of obscure content that gives the service a distinct identity. Regardless of how much independent content Netflix or any other major streaming service amasses, people who frequent those platforms will typically seek for notoriety rather than individuality.

What are their friends watching? What have they seen on social media or on advertising? On Tubi, none of that awareness is available to newcomers. They are left to their own devices and have no choice but to hunt.

Individuality defines Tubi. Are you looking for a zombie movie? Here's a Japanese film from the 1990's on a budget of \$20,000 distributed by a lottery that runs for 80 minutes! Are you in the mood for a comedy? Here's a forgotten comedy film from the early 2000's starring a B-list celebrity you are vaguely familiar with directed by someone who hasn't made a film in over a decade! You might find gold, boring dirt, or dirt so filthy that you consider it gold. It doesn't matter because you're on Tubi. There's over 20,000 movies on this blessed platform and there are countless surprises sprinkled in the mountain of content. While the crude library would give the impression of a cheaply-made application that barely functions like Crackle, Tubi exceeds expectations yet again with its Netflix-tier quality user interface. The search engine on Tubi is perhaps one of the best of all streaming platforms and the service automatically curates content based on your viewing patterns as well!







One gripe I have is the inconsistent streaming resolution that relies on which film or TV series you're watching. A lot of content, if not the majority, does not stream at high-definition due to the period in which the content is released. Netflix would upscale the video feed to high-definition and even apply HDR if that option is available on your display regardless of the original format's resolution. Disney+ takes it a bit too far by remastering the classic Simpsons episodes, rendering every episode in widescreen, thus blocking several sight gags that utilized the original aspect ratio. Fortunately, Disney recently patched this and allows viewers to watch the classic episodes in their original format. However, Tubi's inconsistent visual fidelity would cause some distraction among certain viewers who have an eye sensitive to that aspect.

In spite of the few flaws, Tubi stands tall as an exceptionally well-made service for the low price of zero dollars. Given that it's a free-to-use streaming platform, expect large quantities of appealing titles to arbitrarily exit and enter the platform. Tubi's social media presence is minimal, so the only way they communicate with their audience is through their newsletter, which has its own limitations. Regardless of its shortcomings, scrolling through the vast library of content will inevitably have you stumble across some hidden gems. Their cult classics section is my personal favorite collection of content and makes the platform a mainstay for me. It gives the impression that people working at Tubi are film enthusiasts who seek out this content. Of course, I'm sure people working at other streaming services are passionate about movies as well, but Tubi actively and deliberately caters to a certain niche despite being a general entertainment platform.







The versatility of cinema as an artform isn't represented as well on services like Netflix or Hulu. You have some experimental content, but the films that spearhead these platforms are blockbuster Hollywood endeavors rather than arthouse projects made with a modest financial backing. There's something inexplicably admirable of watching a movie with a minute budget because it feels strangely more authentic and raw. You can deduce how they filmed it yet question how they accomplished so much with so little at their disposal. Film production is undoubtedly an expensive process, so seeing a full-length film that's competently made with impressive visual effects under a budget of 3 million dollars is impressive to say the least. That's why I loved Upgrade and The Invisible Man so much. There's a lot to enjoy with Tubi, and the fact you don't need to spend a dime on it makes it even more special.

There's obviously no cost barrier behind Tubi. Save for a few commercials strategically placed between scene transitions like a cable television broadcast, streaming content is largely unadulterated. Having a friend watch with you always improves the viewing experience, especially if it's a terrible movie that needs a partner to witness it alongside you. Hopefully, Tubi's new owners allow it to become more ambitious in its library and gives it a spicier flair than it currently has. Tubi might not dethrone the streaming titans like Netflix and Amazon Prime, but it cannot be invalidated largely due to its free model and impressive roster of content.

# IT'S A RAINY COLD FALL DAY

Jil Modi

It's a rainy cold fall day. I am standing at the bus stop with my hands deep in my pockets staring at the turn down the road. My headphones are in and I have a song playing in my ears. I somehow relate deeply to every song on my playlist and allow it to narrate my life. I pretend that the person singing the song is singing it just for me and engross myself into it, letting it take me anywhere that is not here. What is it about listening to a sad song on a rainy day that makes everything just a little bit better? Maybe it's because when we listen to this music, we know at least one other person in this world matched our frequency and felt a bit of what we are feeling. Makes us feel less lonely. Or maybe this sad song is making our bottled-up emotions raw and distracting us from the boredom of waiting for a bus.







Now I am thinking about the club meetings I have this week and how I am going to make time for that too. The sinking realization hits me that I don't have enough bullets in my resume so now I am thinking about more opportunities I can pursue. I am looking through websites and finding emails all in the span of this bus ride because I can not let myself waste any time. I mean obviously as a college student I just need to be productive all the time. We are sharks in the water, we need to keep swimming forward to get our oxygen, otherwise we fall behind and die; or in our case, stampeded on by better candidates that didn't stop.

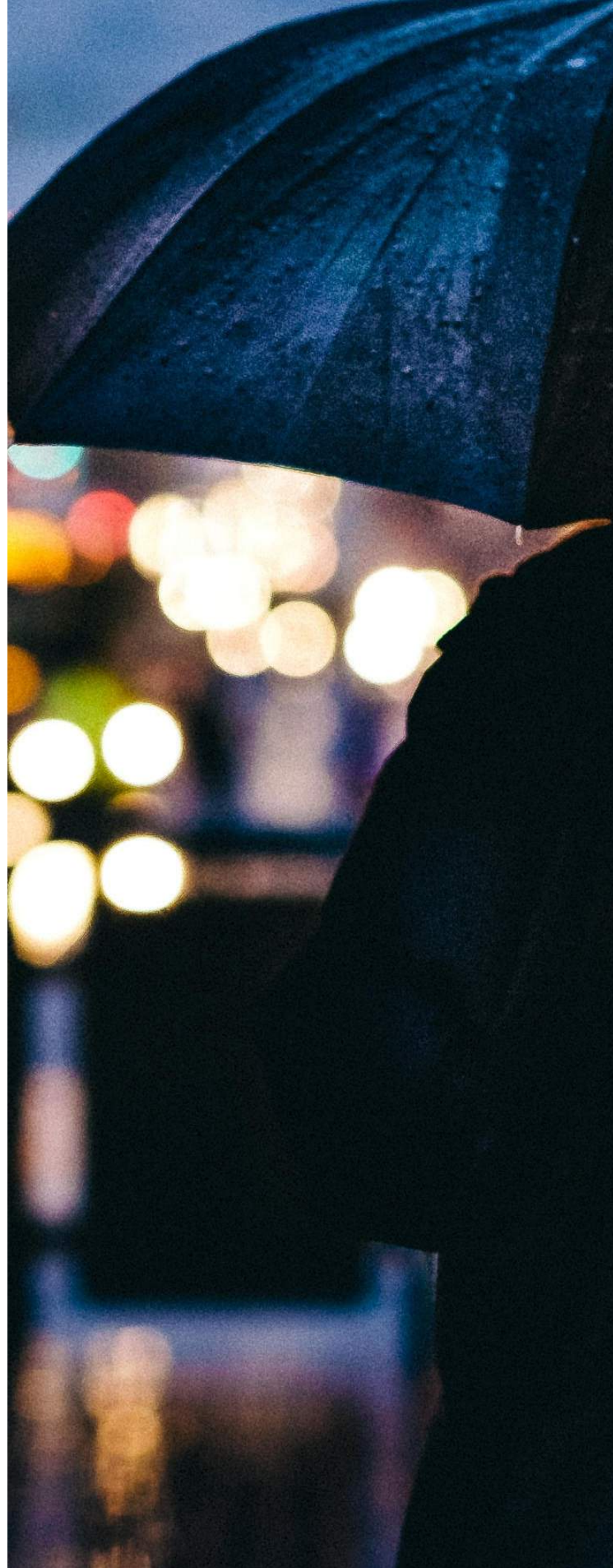
**Eventually**, my bus joins the endless ring of cars turning the corner. Now the race begins, so many students, not enough seats. It's survival of the fittest, college edition. Rules of society and normalcy just fly through the window at this point as people are pushing through trying to make it in. Luckily, I've been waiting at this stop for a while so I step in as soon as the doors open. My promptness is rewarded with a window seat and the daydreamer in me is basically doing cartwheels. I take off my backpack and place it on my lap, turning up my music a little bit and taking off my hood.

I let myself look out the window for a few minutes as the bus begins its short journey to my next class. I only give myself two minutes of this relaxation, which is comprised of me longingly looking out the window as the song I am playing makes me forget who I am. Then, this is over and it is time to return to reality. I've already had a busy day and I have yet to do so much more. First thing I am thinking about are the exams I have coming up and what my study plan is. Okay, so today will consist of at least two hours of studying.

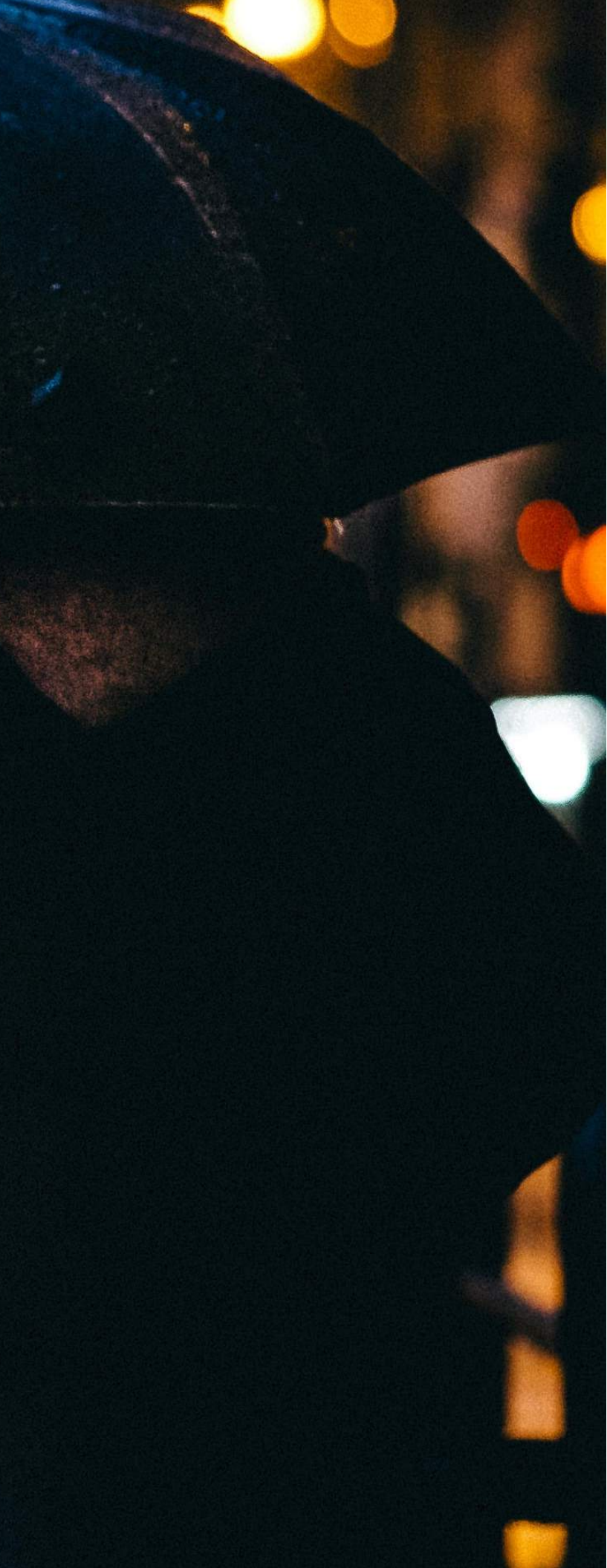


As I am planning my schedule for the rest of my day and week, I realize how much I have to do and it just seems like there is no end. One exam will be over and without even a breath, another will be ready to attack. As I am thinking about this, I turn my head away from my phone and towards the window. I see birds flying outside and trees dancing from the wind. The juxtaposition is almost comical between the serenity of the day and the speed of humans. Cars are whizzing by, honking as they go. Inside them, people are talking on their phones. So many people, so many stories, and then my mind gets to wondering what they are thinking about. They have their struggles, I have mine. When I am thinking about all of my responsibilities, I am so deeply captivated by them, but there are so many people in the world and they are all captivated by their own thoughts. In your mind, you are the main character and in every event that happens, you are thinking about how it affects you. So are they, so is everyone.

And then my brain enters this inevitable spiral which just confuses the hell out of me. What really matters? I mean think about it, we are on a planet as humans for maybe 80 years. That's our shot, that's how long we are here. Life was thriving when we weren't here and it will be thriving when we are gone. So we get 80 years on a planet as humans where we can literally do anything we want, and during this time, we choose to pursue the approval of other humans. It just doesn't make sense. School and exams and jobs and deadlines all just seem so trivial and unnecessary. Why waste our time living schedule by schedule when the world is limitless and there is so much we can be doing that doesn't involve stressing to please other humans.







**Then my brain goes to a weird place. What is the point of the government telling us what to do. Why are we fed this narrative that we have to go to school for x amount of years and then decide what we want to do for the rest of our lives and just continue doing that.**

And if we don't choose to take that path, then we are scrutinized to the core. I mean who decided that this was what life has to be like. We only get one shot at being alive, why can't we just do whatever we want. Why are there so many rules telling us how we have to live our lives? We are humans on a rock that is spinning in a solar system, one small part of tons of other solar systems just making up our galaxy. Tons of galaxies make up our universe, so in the bigger picture we are pretty much completely irrelevant. By some type of miracle the Big Bang created the Earth, and out of all the planets that have ever been discovered, the Earth somehow managed to become a habitable home for humans. And then we decided to create these lives for ourselves where everyone cares so much about what other people think of them and it just blows my mind.

But then what happens if those humans are like hey, lets just do whatever we want. I guess that leads to the debate of are humans innately evil. If they aren't, then maybe we would survive a life like that. But would we want to? Humans love competition, we love accomplishing things, and by nature, we are extremely curious.

**Modern society has allowed us to pursue all of these innate desires in a civil way. And after reading Lord of the Flies, we know that a life without rules leads to anarchy. At this point my brain is just bouncing from idea to idea.**



If you have read this far, you are probably very confused, I am confused too. I wish I can take a linear approach to this and make myself better understand what I am thinking but eventually, I just give up. I try to grab an idea I have and follow it through but it isn't a rainbow with a gold pot of understanding at the end. Instead, imagine walking on this rainbow that divides into 30 paths, each one leading to more loose ends. Eventually you just give up, so do I. I question thinking this much, because what can change, and would change even be good. But I do think every time I embark on this labyrinth, I learn a little bit more about how my mind works and where I fall into all of this. I guess that's just my brain trying to make sense of it all. But I snap out of it just as easily as I get sucked in and realize what needs to be done needs to be done. There are still exams coming up and assignments to be submitted. And maybe the way we are living will still lead us to those paths that will give us happiness. Maybe we are on a predetermined journey and what will happen will happen, we just have to try our best as we go. That's a thought for another daydream. Anyways, my bus stop is finally here and I have a boring lecture waiting for me.





# MUSIC.

MARY CONNELLY

How I Got Through Months of Isolation:  
A Thank You to Taylor Swift



Issue 1 Vol.57 \$0.00



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ZACHARY  
KAUZ &  
JUNE PARK

The Playlist Exchange



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# HOW I GOT THROUGH MONTHS OF ISOLATION: A THANK YOU TO TAYLOR SWIFT

WRITTEN BY MARY CONNELLY

2020 was a horrible year. I think it is safe to assume that most people, if not everyone, would agree with that statement. Sitting in quarantine for months on end with little to no human interaction was extremely difficult, and remote learning has not exactly been my cup of tea. Even now that the situation has improved and restrictions have lessened, things are just not the same.

## LEAVE IT TO TAYLOR SWIFT TO SAVE THE DAY.

While of course Swift, unfortunately, does not have the power to end this tragic pandemic, she does have the power to release emotional, meaningful music that I know has helped many people, including myself, get through these challenging times.



While many of us sat in our pajamas all day, bored out of our minds, truly embodying the phrase “not a lot going on at the moment,” this musical icon released not one, not two, but three albums during this pandemic.

# WOW.

First, *folklore* came in July to help us have that good cry we all really needed. While the thought of summertime music usually evokes light feelings of blue skies and airy happiness, *folklore* is a true reflection of the times. Summer 2020 will forever be a summer that was unlike the rest. While her eighth studio album is certainly not devoid of all joy, it largely tackles difficult relationships and feelings of sadness and frustration. These types of emotions more so speak to the experience of 2020. This pandemic has caused the outside world to become such an ominous place, and so many people have suffered an unspeakable tragedy. While *folklore* is not lyrically about the pandemic, the tone of the album is very fitting for the tragic times.

December 2020 was very different from past years. The Christmas season no longer embodied that cheery excitement I have come to know so well.



Family gatherings were no longer happening and the world was facing such hardship, I found it impossible to be as happy as I normally am around the time of my favorite holiday.



I also contracted coronavirus at the very end of November, causing me to have to completely isolate for a good portion of December. Taylor's surprise release of evermore took place near the end of my quarantine, and it truly helped me get through those last couple days of loneliness.

On April 9, 2021, Swift simultaneously threw us into a wave of nostalgia while gifting us with a taste of newness with her release of Fearless (Taylor's Version). When Swift posted the track list on her Instagram account on April 3, she said, "I'm counting down the minutes til we can all jump into this brave world together, filled with equal parts nostalgia and brand newness."

This re-recording of Fearless has been absolutely magical to listen to (over and over and over again). While the nostalgia has brought me some sadness, I have found a great deal of peace and comfort.

It has been a bittersweet experience, but I have loved every minute spent listening to this album/time machine. I have very much enjoyed hearing the re-recordings of the old songs while having the opportunity to learn six songs that were previously unreleased. Taylor Swift has truly helped me work through the whirlwind of emotions brought on by this pandemic, and I know she has helped others as well.



# The Playlist Exchange

BY ZACHARY KAUZ & JUNE PARK

Welcome to The Playlist Exchange, where we swap playlists and learn more about each other's music preferences.



















Both Playlists can be found at the Rutgers Review Spotify account.

### Physical (feat. Hwa Sa) - Dua Lipa:

Dua Lipa's music was inescapable during the otherwise dour year that was 2020. As the world seemed to shut down entirely, she went through with releasing *Future Nostalgia*, on the back of huge singles like "Don't Start Now" which got me to check out the album myself. Nevertheless I was not aware of this remix with K-Pop singer Hwa Sa. Hwa Sa meshes well with the pulsating synths and nocturnal atmosphere of the song. As we enter the third decade of 80s revival, I must admit that songs of this caliber continue to make the style appealing. I also find it amusing that Dua Lipa was involved in two songs last year that directly reference Olivia Newton John's "Physical", this one and Miley Cyrus' "Prisoner" which features prominent vocals from Dua. The royalties must be quite handsome!!

### Play Ugly - AKMU:

I greatly enjoy the piano playing on AKMU's "Play Ugly". I am used to K-Pop sounding far more synthetic with buzzing synths and digitally sequenced drums. I like that "Play Ugly" sounds relatively stripped back, in some respects resembling a live performance. Normally in modern pop music, organic (sounding) instrumentation is reserved for ballads so I appreciate an upbeat song using piano and drums as the foundation. I will also always respect a slight undercurrent of slap bass which is apparent in the song's verses. I can wholeheartedly say I will be adding this song to my rotation and checking out the AKMU discography.

#	TITLE
1	 Maria Hwa Sa
2	 TWIT Hwa Sa
3	 Physical (feat. Hwa Sa) Dua Lipa, Hwa Sa
4	 What Type of X Jessi
5	 NUNU NANA Jessi
6	 HIP MAMAMOO
7	 AHH OOP! MAMAMOO, eSNa
8	 Mr-Ambiguous MAMAMOO
9	 How People Move AKMU
10	 Play Ugly AKMU
11	 I'm Different HI SUHYUN, BOBBY
12	 Piano Man MAMAMOO
13	 Egotistic MAMAMOO
14	 ALIEN LEE SUHYUN
15	 Tears So Chanwhee
16	 Wise choice So Chan Whee, Kim Jin
17	 Chance to farewell (Music from Fan... So Chan Whee, Kim Jin, Song Woo Seok,...
18	 Born To Be Free So Chan Whee, Luda of Dickids, 김현비





# Wise Choice

- SO CHAN WHEE AND KIM JIN:












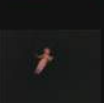

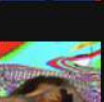
We have treaded far out of K-Pop territory by this point! June has seen fit to leave one more surprise in the playlist and pivot towards full on hard rock. Through an immediately revving, dramatic guitar riff, I knew I was about to hear a heavier composition. I was still surprised however by much of the song being piano-driven, a popular trick in 1970s Rock music that still adds a theatrical flair to modern music. At the 2:22 mark, the vocals reach a climax that I was eagerly awaiting and it does not disappoint. The moment of silence at 2:51 also enhanced the structure of the song, as if it was an extravagant multi-act narrative. Even within June's playlist, "Wise Choice" is a journey unto itself.

## Cappuccino Summit - Ilkea

When I first saw the title, I assumed the song would be calming, like something you'd play in a cafe. What I listened to was the opposite of calming, but enjoyable nonetheless. I'm not used to songs without lyrics and showcasing a synthesizer. While I'm not familiar with Ilkae and their album Pistachio Island, I really enjoyed this intro. Cappuccino Summit gave me a somewhat uneasy feeling, like being over-caffeinated and being able to hear your body freak out at your poor decision-making. I think Ilkea creates a harmonious balance between calming and off-putting, using soothing lo-fi beats with an abrupt high-pitched beep to keep you uncomfortable.

## Mothball the Fleet - Deerhoof

This song is definitely closest to my music preferences, a lot more upbeat and great to listen to while walking. I later looked up the music group Deerhoof, an experimental noise punk and indie rock band. There was something whimsical and spiritual about this song, something I'd play while running around in the woods with friends. This was definitely my favorite song in the playlist and I will definitely be listening to some Deerhoof songs later this Summer.

#	TITLE	
1		Face Pressed Against Glass Cities Aviv
2		Cappuccino Summit Ilkae
3		Splits Are Parted Amen Dunes
4		Studie Teebs, Panda Bear
5		Small Mr. Man Pants Odd Nosdam
6		Industrious Seefeel
7		Off on It Róisín Murphy
8		RAPID & COMPLETE RECOVERY SPIRIT OF THE BEEHIVE
9		Mothball the Fleet Deerhoof
10		Frau Wav Clark
11		Wind-Up Doll Peggy March
12		Floating Julee Cruise
13		Shellfish Mademoiselle Róisín Murphy
14		Woo! Remi Wolf





# Wind-Up Doll

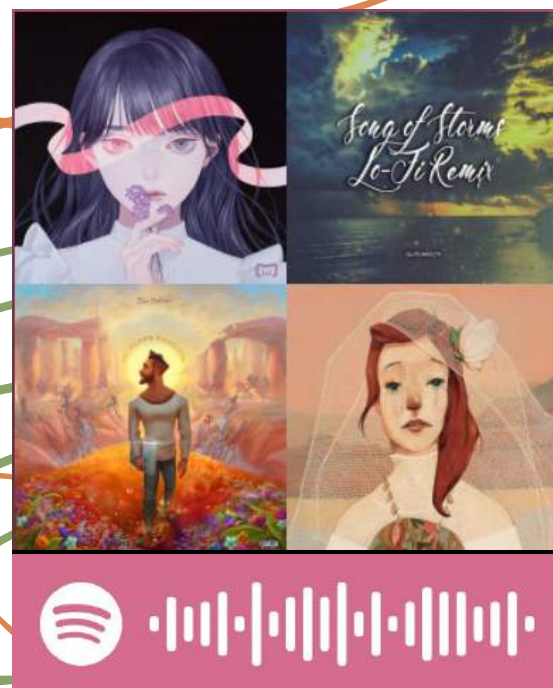
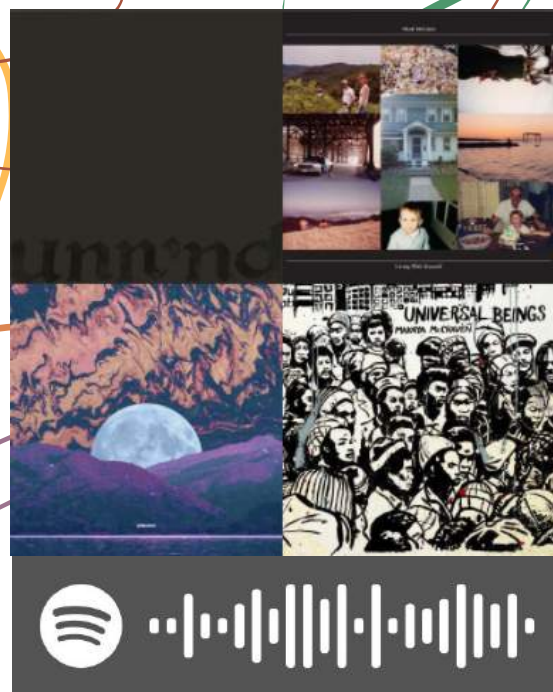
- PEGGY MARCH

Peggy March was a break away from the genres Zach shared in his playlist. Wind-Up Doll somewhat reminded me of Que Sera, Sera from Doris Day, and I later looked up the release dates, Que Sera Sera released in 1956 and Wind-Up Doll was released in 1963. This song reminded me of black comedy films like Heathers and the American anthology horror television series American Horror Story. Something about the sweet dream-like lyrics gives me discomfort, hence the horror content connection. A lot of Zach's playlist is definitely a "sit-down and listen" rather than music to move to.





# PLAYLISTS







VOLUME 57 ISSUE 1

# QUARANTINE

THE COMFORT FOODS THAT CONSOLED US

# THE COMFORT FOODS THAT CONSOLED US

BY EMILY CHOW, ZACHARY KAUZ, JUNE PARK

Life during the pandemic has forced us to confide in simple pleasures. Many forms of social interaction were removed from our lives while our personal stressors stuck around and sometimes intensified. It was a necessity for many of us to cook more due to safety concerns, but it's also a source of comfort and a means to keep life more exciting! Some of us tried cooking something new, others revisited old stand-bys. Regardless, certain foods added a dose of sanity to our daily lives, for which we can only be thankful.

**Emily Chow:** I have never really understood the conversation surrounding the desire for authenticity in Chinese-American food. Admittedly, I see why some would be concerned about Panda Express or Chinese takeout being the entirety of some Americans' knowledge of East Asian cuisine. Chinese fast food is really but a drop of water in the ocean. There are thousands of dishes, and dozens of unique cuisines that are spread across China, and it is almost an insult to consider the development of Chinese-American cuisine as a genuine representation of that culture. This opinion has become quite popular when discussing what constitutes "good" Chinese food. Authenticity is taken to be paramount, and anything else is looked upon with disdain.







That being said, I find myself confused with the fixation on authenticity as the predominant trait to be sought after. I spent much of my life eating food that other Chinese-Americans would consider to be inauthentic. I made bacon-egg fried rice, and enjoyed sesame chicken. I could never truly disparage the existence of Chinese takeout as a food crime. I appreciate the food my parents taught me to make using the ingredients that were available to them, and I appreciate the generations of Chinese who did what they could with the little that they had.

Zachary Kauz: The pandemic has led me to take up the habit of making bubble tea. With just five ingredients, hot water, condensed milk, simple syrup, tapioca pearls, and my choice of tea, the flavor possibilities are endless. In a time so ordinary and banal, it has been a pleasure to grab random boxes of tea off the supermarket shelf and make them into bubble tea. In my culinary experiments, rooibos tea has yet to be surpassed, but green tea is reliable and the coconut mango tea a pleasant surprise. My weekly bubble tea creations are comforting but also an excuse to try new experiments. My personal rendition of bubble tea doesn't quite resemble any other type I've had but that means it stands alone from the cafes I'll eventually be able to frequent yet again. When lockdown times are behind me, I will take my interest in bubble tea homebrewing with me. Truthfully, the only flaw in my plan is my lack of patience.



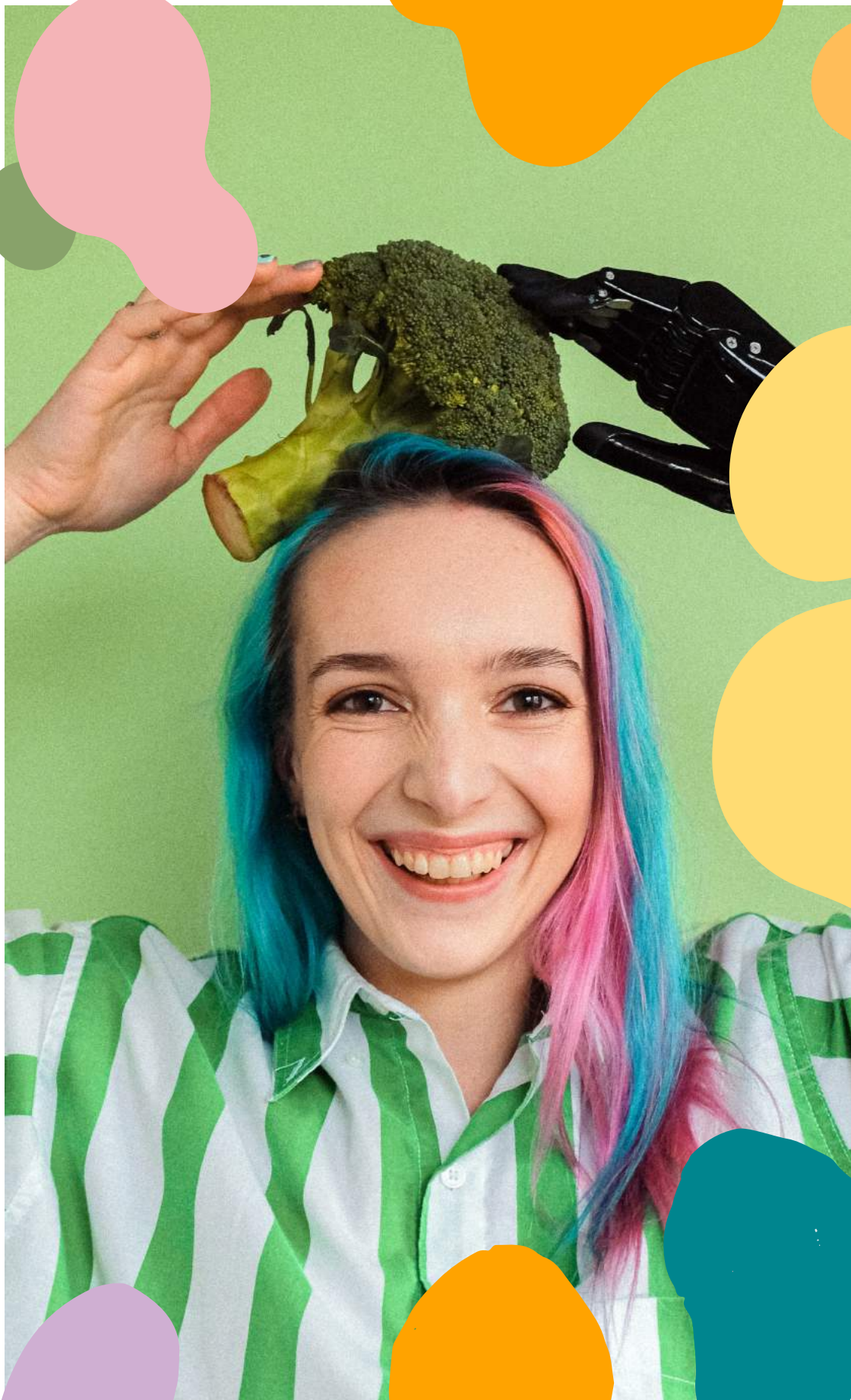
It is the norm to have bubble tea iced, but I am more liable to immediately take it off the boiler and get to drinking. I guess that is just a testament to the recipe's taste.

**June Park:** I think we've all had a caffeine addiction moment, with coffee, energy drinks, and caffeinated teas. I used to treat coffee as a way to wake up, start my day, and bring me to life. The downside is I never got to enjoy it, it was just a mandatory part of my morning, no different than brushing my teeth. I used my quarantine to take more time for my morning routine and use coffee as a calming or therapeutic moment, often sitting by my herb garden and my dog. I rarely buy coffee from cafes like Starbucks or Dunkin unless it's for a social reason, because it is often over priced and too sweet. A pet peeve of mine was the normalization of spending \$10 on an iced coffee. At home, I'm able to customize my ingredients, and experiment with various flavors. It's simple, but it gives me more control and provides me with a brief break. After playing around with a milk frother and french press, my favorite coffee in the morning is a cold brew with caramel milk foam, made with a caramel coffee creamer and milk.





# P O T P O U R R I





"C'mon Troy, ain't nothin' but a peanut!" Roy yelled at him through blaring headphones. Troy flexed his legs, he breathed and pulled his abs. He stared at the bar ahead of him. 455 pounds of iron weighed down, putting a bend in it. Troy had doubts. His root was shriveled, his convictions bare. He had worked up to this weight, and now he felt something unearthing. Something, somewhere, a spirit, a ghost, a daemon had gripped his ear, his spirit, and forbade him. Simple doubt.

**HE MADE  
HIMSELF ANGRY.**

He thought of slaughter. He thought of war. He thought of hell. The slaps to the face, the beating of life, all wrath he had taken and all wrath he will give in kind. The slow death of the wounded warrior, the carnal fight to the death, the ending abrupt with a bludgeon to the head with a big rock. He wanted to yell. He wanted to take Roy, his keeper, to the ground and then to the bowels of hell with a fat kettlebell smashing his shaved skull into a wet jelly. Instead, he walked under the bar.



**HE HEAVED IT ONTO  
HIS SHOULDERS.**

Not even from the rack, he felt a small kip. The loaded pinch somewhere in the ripcord he called a spine. He continued. With small little baby steps backward, Roy had his massive black hand sprawled between Troy's shoulder blades to guide him into position.

**THE END  
OF TROY**



Troy's feet were set, the hand lifted, and with a premade timing, the woman on his 1975 Italian jazz-funk track began to wail her mourning cries. He breathed a deep breath, braced his abdominals against himself like a tendriled girdle, he unlocked his hips and went down.

A slow descent, all cylinders were firing. Veins were bulging through his neck and forehead, his knees shook back and forth like shaken compass needles. He held his breath, his face red and pulsing tender like vision bestowed upon a newborn yet born. He reached the bottom of his movement.

The bar bent like a crooked yoke, the clips keeping the stack of careening iron in place. Troy heard his heartbeat over the cries of the Italian soprano, his ears hurting numbly while his interior held a vacuumed compression.

He began to rise. And he blared. He grunted. His knees shook even more violently. His spine was in pure compression, his discs all against each other in an unmitigated press. Like a fly buzzing far away into his ear, forcing its way through a million walls and a million moats and a million jazz measures, a doubt registered. Troy batted it away, but its memory lingered on the wall in a stain. Another imperceptible thing soon grew into a small, barely audible murmur. Somewhere lower in his form, down where his torso meets his legs, a small whizzing grew into a chatter. A chatter into a yell, and a yell into a scream. His spine was the only thing existing in that carnal snap.

**Troy steeled himself and continued his ascension.**



**His vision, not  
important, went  
white. His hearing,  
not important,  
sounded of a steady  
ring. His taste, not  
important, held  
nothing. He  
regardless, smelled  
iron though he  
wasn't breathing.  
And he felt it all.**

All his built grievances stacked on top of one another, building his ascent. The weight didn't get lighter, he simply got harder. And with nothing but his screaming spine and his grunting yell, he felt himself push it all the way up to a standing position. Robotically, he reracked the weight by feel. And upon letting it fall into the rack, he fell to a knee. Vision tricked back, and through his ears, he heard the subtle riffing of an Italian jazz drummer and trumpeter bouncing a melody against a fleeting beat. He shakily rose, standing with trembling legs. He was alone.

There was not a soul in the gym. Besides the echoing sound of Italian jazz, it was still. He turned around to look in the mirror, and in it, he saw a figure reaching for his shoulder behind him. He spun around and almost fell, and instead was graced with the sight of a golden staircase. It shined so brightly, Troy averted his eyes with a squint. When it dimmed, it was only him in the squat rack and the staircase splayed before him. He said, in a simple, matter of fact tonality, "Ah Shit." He walked up the stairs.





# TO DIE IN A WAR



## THE IDEA IS OLD: THE ROMANTIC BEND TO DYING IN A WAR.

You die for glory, honor, humility; an endearing shadow of nobility blankets you for your sacrifice. For the lost young men of the past, it had allure in lieu of the grandeurs of industrial labor and menial agriculture. Margaret heard you got drafted and after pilfering bloomers, you marched off to adventure with the hands of your country at your back and your friends at your side. Even if you ate it, you were a damn hero, remembered for as long as those that mattered could.

But romance is dead. Reality is bathed in stark waves that beat an endless note. Grueling days, illness; Death and suffering and depravity until you and your fellow soldiers are animals vying and tearing and ripping.

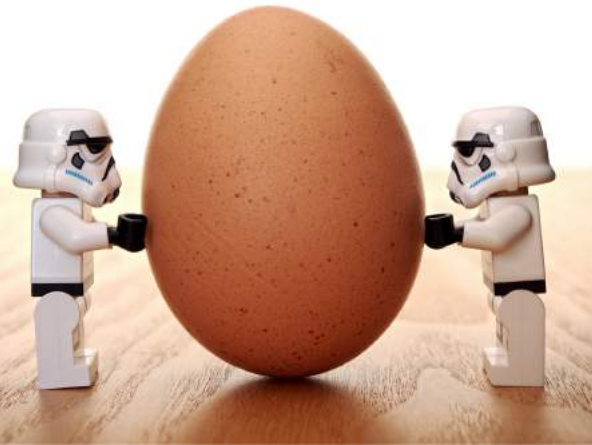
Until your insides look like ribbons tied from an air conditioner. Until errant shells render you a fine red mist. Until you get blended into the mud by the rain and passing tanks or holes appear where your organs used to sit and play cards with each other. The sheer veil is torn off the gaping maw of war's enraptured face, you don't think she's as pretty as you thought.

I want to die in a war. I wish to see its bits and vittles. Ernst Jünger (29 March 1895 – 17 February 1998), a Great War veteran who compiled his wartime diaries into a novel called *Storm of Steel* (1919), had it right. This man, wounded four times, enlisted from when it began and relieved the day it ended, loved war.

He is one of those men who relish it, thrive in it, live in it, above anyone else. From him is the articulation of adventure and love in what most saw as the worst loss of man since its inception. The more popular American who comes to mind with kind ideas is Teddy Roosevelt. He had similar ideas of the jolly good fun of war, the spirit of adventure and the hardships of war building strong and respectable men. If another Great War occurred, a war of love and meaning, you could sell my things and burn a candle. World War I was not deprived of less than perfect reasons for its breakout and undertaking, but it was a war of love at its beating, bleeding heart. F. Scott Fitzgerald (September 24, 1896 – December 21, 1940) explains it in *Tender is the Night* (1934).

"...This western-front business couldn't be done again, not for a long time. The young men think they could do it but they couldn't. They could fight the first Marne again but not this. This took religion and years of plenty and tremendous sureties and the exact relation that existed between the classes. The Russians and Italians weren't any good on this front. You had to have whole-souled sentimental equipment going back further than you could remember. You had to remember Christmas, and postcards of the Crown Prince and his fiancée, and little cafés in Valence and beer gardens in Unter den Linden and weddings at the mairie, and going to the Derby, and your grandfather's whiskers."

"General Grant invented this kind of battle at Petersburg in sixty- five."



"No, he didn't — he just invented mass butchery. This kind of battle was invented by Lewis Carroll and Jules Verne and whoever wrote Undine, and country deacons bowling and marraines in Marseilles and girls seduced in the back lanes of Wurtemberg and Westphalia. Why, this was a love battle — there was a century of middle-class love spent here. This was the last love battle."

Look at how romantic it is. What modern war compares to this? What love is bestowed except that from the pockets of lofted bureaucrats and politicians or the defense industry? Perhaps in their own worlds, the fighters of today's middle eastern conflicts wage their war from their own place of love, no matter how reflexively vile or hateful it's foundation may be.

But where I am concerned, where we are concerned, as American citizens, there is no love in these wars.





THEY ARE  
MANUFACTURED LIKE  
CARS AND TOYS AND  
COMPUTERS AND WE ALL  
BLEED A FAKE AND  
POSTURED BLOOD WHEN  
SOMEONE IS SWALLOWED  
IN ITS GULLET.

Who loves? Who loves death and destruction to pad a corporate pocket? Who loves Banana Wars? Who loves Haliburton and Colt and Honeywell and everyone else that builds the inanimate that renders others the same? Who loves the interest of American reach and imperialism but in the guise of humanitarianism, and reaps the benefits when a foreign country is in shambles rather than free?

There is no glory. There is corporate profit. There is no national honor. There is foreign interests. There is no humility. There is cold slaughter. There is no love. There is apathy.

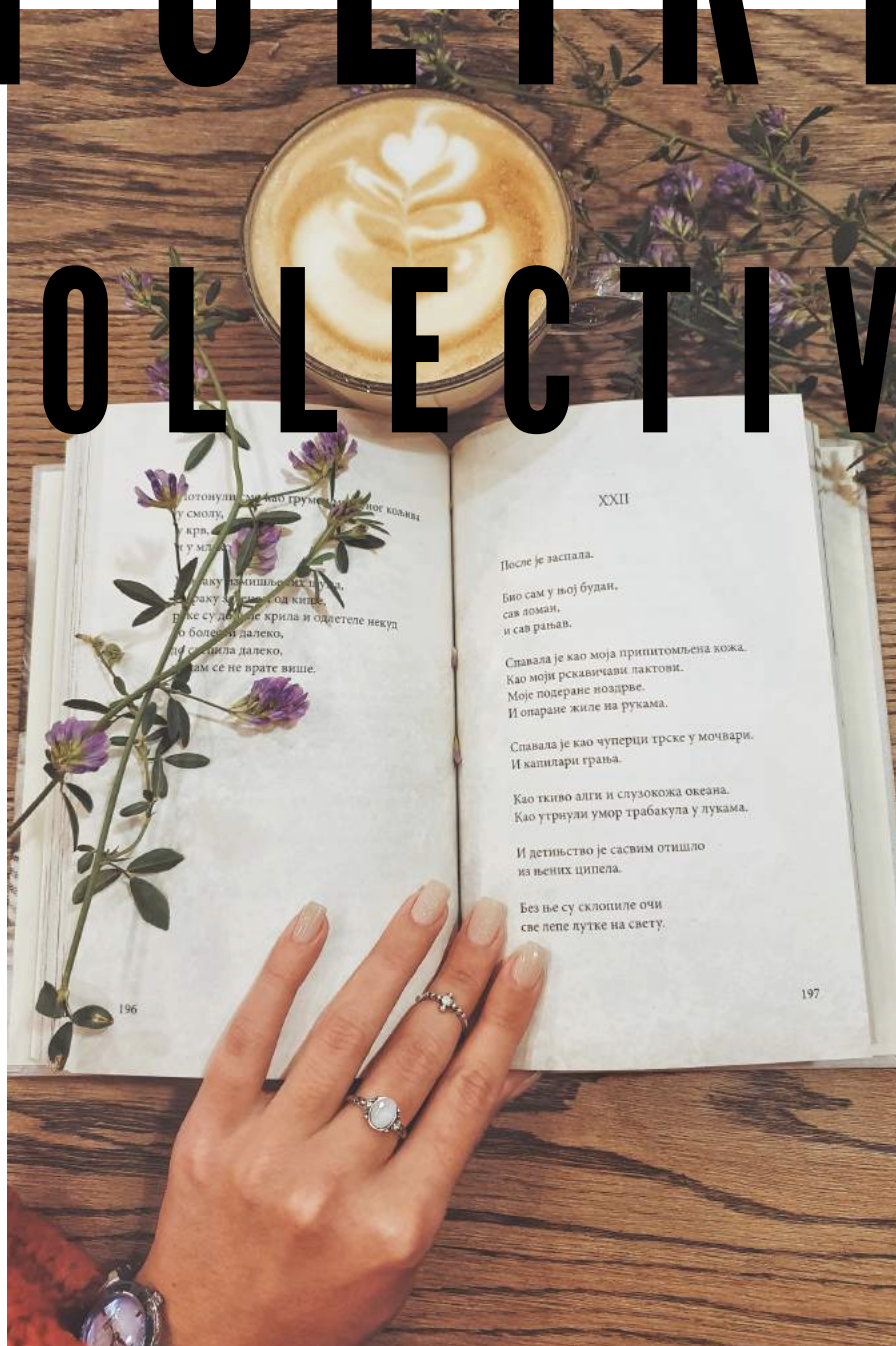
What I ultimately found was that there is no war to die in where any of the virtues extolled apply.

The human nature of it has been gutted, and in place of its warm entrails is the cold moves and games played by players whose worlds dwarf any of ours.

I still want to die in a war in some way. No war is worth dying in, I've concluded, unless it is a war that you make for yourself. You gotta cook from scratch, off the shelf doesn't cut it.

# POETRY COLLECTIVE

ERIN CHANG



MARZIA KARIM

ISSUE 1 VOLUME 57

## PINK SOVEREIGNTY

A young woman lies alone in her bed  
Hand between thighs  
Eyes fixed on the ceiling and her past lover in  
her mind

A young 12 year old girl in Tanzania  
A land so far away from here and a time so  
far away from now  
Has her clitoris cut off and genitals mutilated  
to reduce promiscuity  
Except the land isn't so far away and neither  
is the time  
This happened 2 years ago

St Agatha of Sicily born in 231 AD  
14 years old and didn't want to have sex with  
an older man interested in her  
Sent away to be raped and tortured in prison  
for it  
Has her breasts cut off and put on a plate for  
men's consumption  
She's deemed a virgin martyr despite the  
rapes

## PIECES OF ME

So here I am  
Here I sit facing the past 3 years,  
Feet dangling below me almost  
reaching the surface of the water  
Here I am, smoking your brand of  
cigarettes and drinking your favorite  
vodka  
Wrapped warmly in your hoodie that  
you gave me after we broke each  
other  
And here I am searching for the pieces  
To put me back together again  
A constellation here  
A drink there  
A hookup here  
And a poem there  
Here I am searching for the past and  
where I went wrong and where you  
went right





### Act III

We spend our whole lives trying to  
understand ourselves  
when suddenly, a part of us is stolen

Detachment from a dream  
create opposing impulses  
You want to yet you can't  
You try to push only to get pulled

This is what confliction feels like  
Stealing your shadow

But choice and agency  
are the embodiment of freedom  
Live authentically  
Be free



## AFTERMATH

We were two empty shells  
that had somehow seen each other  
as reflections of ourselves  
and we'll tell it the way that makes the best story  
do we tell it in the way that it should have been  
or do we tell it in the way that it happened  
a dull silent ache  
letting you feel what it's like to be rained upon  
drowning in your own eyes  
finding comfort in someone you've never met  
and hoping that a stranger will understand  
I know that I'll never reach you  
but I won't ever forget about you either  
you're a dream within a dream  
a kind of longing that can never be fulfilled  
yet now it is so satisfying  
as it stands on its own  
A distant infatuation  
-- I wish you well



# Homage to Love's Ubiquity

It exists not only in romantic  
gestures  
Not only in the warm, small space  
between my lips and my lover's  
Not only in the warm glow of  
moonlight casting down on my  
bare chest through the windows  
of his car  
Not only in a tried and true  
marriage of 58 years  
Not only between two girls with  
eager, clumsy hands and mouths  
Nor only between two boys in the  
dark, trying to tell each other  
what they wish they didn't have  
to

It exists in the tenderness of my  
friend's voice when she tells me  
"I'm probably not making sense"  
after she talked at length about  
her passion, even though she  
made perfect sense

It exists in Rupi Kaur's and Olivia  
Gatewood's poems. Poems they  
hope will help men and women and  
they haven't met and probably  
never will





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